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Foreign Communities

Kojects author maps Seoul Metro aboveground

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This aerial image shows where much of the Seoul Metro system runs. / Illustration by Nikola Medimorec, photo by Hiroyuki Nakamo CC BY 2.0

By Jon Dunbar

German urbanist Nikola Medimorec has been familiarizing the public to Seoul's complex public transport system for years, but he's found a new way to lay out the capital's geography.

After seeing [similar images of major European and American metropolises](#), he marked up an aerial photograph of Seoul, showing exactly where the numerous metro lines run.

"I always enjoy seeing transit pictures but they always focus on American or European systems and there's little attention to Seoul's amazing subway system," Medimorec, one of two bloggers behind [Korean infrastructure blog Kojects.com](#), told The Korea Times. "So I wanted to create a picture in the similar style of Seoul and to show people that Korea's capital has an amazing, large network."

He built the image over top a 2006 photo by Hiroyuki Nakamo, a Flickr user from Japan.

Medimorec's background is in urban geography and he knows his way around modern mapmaking techniques. To make this image, he used the open source graphic design software GIMP 2 to draw the subway lines "by hand," even color coding them to match the official maps.

The image shows Seoul Metro lines 1 to 7 and 9, plus the AREX Line, Gyeongui-Jungang Line and the new U1 Line.

"I actually learned a lot by drawing this map," he said.

"Line 5 was by far the hardest subway line to draw. It takes a lot of turns, goes up to Gwanghwamun and then again south. Especially fitting Line 5 into the city center was difficult and I drew it a couple of times before I had acceptable results."

He also points to features of the metro system, such as the Eungam Loop at the western end of Line 6, Line 4's turn at Sinyongsan and the Line 2 spur line starting at Sindorim.

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"Seeing how it looks in reality makes you realize how crowded the northern side of the Han River is," he said.

However, due to the limitations of the photograph, the image excludes Line 8, the Bundang and Sinbundang lines, Everline and Incheon's metro system.

Medimorec also muses on the future of the Seoul Metro system, for which 10 new lines are planned.

"Once all these lines are built, all major areas will have subway access," he said.

"This picture gives a new perspective on a familiar system. It broadens our horizon and it nicely shows how many layers a city has. We take the subway system for granted without realizing it enables us to move around, go to school or work or do anything else in the capital region. I hope the picture makes us appreciate the Seoul Metro and all the efforts that have been put into it since the first line opened in 1974."

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